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ABSTRACT

A committee of high school students was formed to promote the positive involvement of students in the educational system of North Carolina. Sponsored and supported by the State Department of Public Instruction, the committee draws its members from all areas of the State. The focus is not only on providing a forum for students' opinions and criticisms of the educational system but also on involving them directly and constructively in the total educational process. Students can offer important insights into many problems confronting high schools today and, working with faculty members and administrators, students can design effective, practical solutions. (Author)

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid changes of modern times demand increased efforts toward bringing about better understanding, more effective communication and increased participation by all groups in all phases of society. This effort is essential and of special significance in public education.

The Task Force on Student Involvement, in existence only one year as an official arm of the State Department of Public Instruction, has already made a significant impact on public education in North Carolina. Originally conceived to help improve race and student-faculty relationships at the secondary level, the Task Force has expanded its participation to include most general areas of public education. For example, the Task Force is currently serving on curriculum advisory committees and accreditation teams; conducting surveys of student needs; participating in human relations and other in-service training programs; and promoting programs designed to improve the welfare of youth.

Evaluation of the first year's activities of the Task Force on Student Involvement has indicated that secondary school students are mature, responsible and willing to assist school administrators in solving most educational problems. It is felt that students' ideas have contributed toward the shaping of more meaningful educational programs for all youth.

The potential for student involvement in improving education and developing leadership among youth is unlimited. Without reservation I have recommended organized student involvement for each local educational agency and local school in my State. Similarly, I should like to recommend this unique and innovative program to my colleagues in other states.

A. Craig Phillips
State Superintendent of
Public Instruction
Raleigh, North Carolina

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Section One

THE TASK FORCE FOR STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

The Task Force for Student Involvement is a committee of high school students designed to promote the positive involvement of students in the educational system of North Carolina. Sponsored and supported by the State Department of Public Instruction, this committee draws its members from all areas of the state. However, it is a unique organization in that its influence and the impetus for its programs come from the state level and then are transmitted to the local school systems. The focus is not only upon providing a forum for students' opinions and criticisms of the educational system but also upon directly involving them constructively in the total educational process. The basic philosophy of the Task Force is that *students can offer important insights into many problems confronting high schools today and that students, working with faculty members and administrators, can design effective, practical solutions.*

Objectives

Although the Task Force attempts to remain flexible enough to respond to the changing needs of students and the educational system, it has focused upon several key areas. The primary objectives are:

1) to open channels within school systems to promote communication between students and administrators;

2) to involve students directly in the educational process outside the classroom (in such areas as curriculum evaluation and school accreditation);

3) to advise the State Department of Public Instruction of current student concerns;

4) to act as spokesmen for youth opinions and ideas to any organization which requests student participation;

5) to define recurring problems in North Carolina high schools, explore them, and propose solutions; and

6) to act as a central "clearing house" for the exchange of ideas among high schools, such as innovative academic programs or successful methods of handling problems.

The key to all these aims is responsible student participation and initiative. The Task Force has established many specific methods and concrete programs to achieve these long-range objectives.

Method

"Be a spoon. Stir 'em up!" is the way one Task Force member describes her role in relation to other North Carolina students. *The object is not to*

agitate for violent reform or to encourage unrest but to direct criticism into constructive channels and to encourage students to become involved in the educational process at their own high schools. The Task Force does not set up specific programs for students in local school systems and visits them only by invitation. However, by providing inspiration, information, consultants, and an example of involvement at the state level, Task Force members hope to spur others to initiate progressive projects and work for improved attitudes and communications within their local systems.

Section Two

ORIGIN OF THE TASK FORCE

The Task Force for Student Involvement originally began as a terminal summer program. High school unrest had disrupted several North Carolina areas during the 1968-69 school year. The situation had become critical in a few areas where school-related problems resulted in placing law enforcement officers on special alert or in activating the National Guard and establishing city-wide curfews. Roger Carrick, out-going president of the Youth Council of North Carolina (YCNC)*, an independent state-wide organization oriented toward positive youth involvement, and Dr. H. T. Conner, former advisor of YCNC and present Assistant Superintendent for Research and Planning for the State Department of Public Instruction, decided that the problem of high school unrest deserved special attention and that the youth of the state should be involved directly in the resolution of the problem.

With the advice and support of Dr. Conner, Carrick developed the idea of a summer Task Force to involve high school students directly in solving human relations problems and to give students a greater voice and more responsibility in the administrative processes of education. His plan was adopted by the State Board of Education and jointly sponsored by the State Department of Public Instruction, the Learning Institute of North Carolina and the State Planning Task Force, an agency of the Department of Administration.

Organization and Aims

Roger Carrick, the originator of the Task Force idea and a 1969 high school graduate, was hired as a summer intern to explore high school unrest. The State Department of Public Instruction sponsored an ad hoc committee of ten high school students from across the state to aid his study. The purpose of this committee was to research the opinion of North Carolina youth on several key issues, to identify the major problems in the state's high schools, and to gather student ideas and suggestions for possible solutions. The committee members were vitally concerned about the need for student involvement and represented different racial and socio-economic backgrounds. In cooperation with the Human Relations Division of the State Department of Public Instruction, they chose five representative school systems as "targets" for their study. Working in these five systems, the committee approached the general problems of the relationships between students and administrators and between students and students. A three-step plan was formulated to deal with these problems:

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*There is no direct connection between the Task Force and YCNC. The relationship of the Task Force and other youth groups will be discussed later in the report.

1) Gather information and opinions from as many students as possible;

2) Compile and interpret this information and propose a concrete plan for positive student involvement; and

3) Distribute this plan to superintendents, principals, and other people in secondary education.

By talking to many other students, they hoped not only to help to achieve a broader understanding of high school unrest, but also to gain greater credibility for their plan as representative of the ideas of many students rather than on the basis of the personal opinions of a few students. During the summer of 1969, the student committee met with the State's superintendents and principals to explain the rationale behind their plan and to seek support in promoting its adoption.

Results from the Study of Student Unrest

Compiling information gathered during the summer's research, Carrick prepared a thirty-page booklet entitled, "Student Involvement: A Bridge to Total Education."* Part of the study report, published in August, 1969, is devoted to recommendations of the Summer Task Force to superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and deans of students in the area of high school unrest. Also included are reprints of two articles on student unrest: "Editor's Dispatch: The Letter for Administrators" (Vol. 24, No. 24, September, 1969), and "Student Discipline and Student Rights," by Robert L. Hinson (Popular Government, May, 1969); and a bibliography on student unrest compiled by Mrs. Gladys Ingle, Education Information Library, State Department of Public Instruction.

The heart of the study report and the section having the greatest impact is the list of student recommendations. The suggestions contain some basic attitudinal statements such as, *"Be honest, straight-forward, and frank with students;"* and *"Do not treat students as less than adults until some action gives you cause to do so"*. Aimed at overcoming difficulties in achieving representation for all racial and economic groups, numerous voting suggestions are made in the sensitive areas of student councils, cheerleaders, beauty queens, senior superlatives and marshals for graduation exercises.

The specific recommendations are too numerous to be discussed in detail, but the general focus is upon greater student involvement and more direct communication between students, faculty and administrators. Greater student responsibility is suggested in areas such as advisory committees for academic departments, for guidance departments, and on student discipline and student-administered tutorial programs, study halls, and monitor systems when needed. To obtain *"optimum positive student involvement,"* the Task Force urged such actions as reduction of economic restrictions on participation in extra-curricular activities and the creation of more service-oriented clubs and interest clubs. For greater communication and understanding, the Task Force

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*A copy of this booklet may be obtained free of charge by writing to Task Force for Student Involvement, State Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, North Carolina 27602.

recommended ten specific actions for the administrator, including: (1) establish a "Principal's Column" in the school newspaper; (2) avoid placing the Student Council "in such a perspective as to render it an 'arm' of the administration;" and (3) "establish and disseminate to all students the bases on which a student will be disciplined, suspended, or expelled." *All the recommendations contained in the report are presented as suggestions rather than demands and are aimed at forestalling unrest.*

The points outlined in the study report were used as the basis for discussion at superintendents' and principals' conferences in the late summer in 1969. Since then, approximately nine thousand of these booklets have been distributed. Although a few local administrators interviewed were not familiar with the booklet or found the ideas "old hat", most found it helpful. Several principals used the suggestions as the basis for changing their election procedures or setting up advisory committees and others ordered copies for every faculty member. Due to its successful reception and the demands for more copies, the report, "Student Involvement: A Bridge to Total Education," is presently being expanded and revised.

Superintendents and Principals Conferences

The 1969 Superintendents Conference which was held June 22-25 at Mars Hill, North Carolina, included student participants for the first time. The Summer Task Force and other invited students took part in discussion groups on Program Relevancy and Human Relations. All of the superintendents came in contact with student opinion. During round table discussions open to all, the students presented and defended the conclusions and suggestions that had been reached from the summer's study.

Reactions of the administrators to the role of the students were quite mixed. Some felt that the participation of the youth was "worthwhile" and "the most constructive part of the entire conference." However, others felt that the students were "arrogant" and that students misunderstood the role of the superintendent. Some administrators believed that student power was unduly stressed and that they should have been consulted about Task Force activities in advance. Nonetheless, many who disagreed with some of the attitudes and opinions expressed found that the exposure to the students' viewpoint was valuable. Future relationships between the Task Force and local school systems were greatly influenced by the impressions formed at the summer conference. Superintendents who were disappointed or antagonized have been reluctant to cooperate with their local Task Force member. On the other hand, several superintendents were so impressed with the "enthusiasm and concern" of the students that they invited the Task Force to their school system to talk with students, administrators, and school boards. Others have been receptive to Task Force involvement in the student problems of their districts.

The members of the Summer Task Force also attended the eight regional Principals' Conferences in a role similar to that at the Superintendents' Conference. Many of the specific suggestions in "Student Involvement: A Bridge to Total Education" were discussed. Although not all the recommendations were immediately adopted, the general response to the student participation was favorable and both students and administrators felt that the dialogue was valuable.

Section Three

THE PERMANENT TASK FORCE

Once the summer program was completed, state education leaders began discussing its success and potential. The students had proven themselves both interested and responsible. Although local superintendents and high school principals had mixed feelings about student involvement at their conferences, many were concerned about increased student unrest within their systems. At the state level, there was interest in incorporating the students' viewpoint and in utilizing the energy and initiative of youth in the resolution of problems within the state's schools. The constructive proposals by the Summer Task Force and its basic structure and philosophy seemed to be an appropriate base from which to bring about greater student involvement. Despite the fact that no funds had been budgeted for such a program, the State Department of Public Instruction decided in the fall of 1969 to establish a permanent Task Force and to channel uncommitted federal funds into this project. Miss Deborah Sweet, a summer intern with the Department of Public Instruction, was hired as the Adult Director of the Task Force. State Superintendent A. Craig Phillips presented the idea to the Council of State, a committee of the top elected officials in North Carolina, and they appropriated some additional funds from their Contingency Fund. Thus, the Task Force realized the necessary funds to enable it to function in the state.

Organization

The permanent Task Force for Student Involvement is a sixteen-member committee with two members coming from each of the eight educational districts in North Carolina. A conscientious effort was made to have representation from both urban and rural areas, large and small high schools, different socio-economic groups, and to maintain an approximate black-white, male-female balance on the committee. This group is headed by a Student Director, from a local high school and a part-time employee of the State Department of Public Instruction, and an Adult Director, a full-time employee of the State Department of Public Instruction. Originally a part of the Division of Planning and Research, the Task Force eventually was transferred to the Division of Program Services in the Department.

Duties and Responsibilities

All Task Force members are expected to attend monthly meetings in Raleigh. They are reimbursed for their travel and subsistence expenses for each two-day conference and receive a seven dollar per diem payment. Task Force members also must be available for participation in conferences, committee work and visits to other school systems. In addition they have contacted all the superintendents in their area districts by letter and have visited personally with many of them to explain the purposes and activities of the Task Force. Within their own high schools they promote positive student involvement by sharing their ideas and experiences and by developing specific programs such as human relations activities and student-faculty interaction functions. All of the policies and projects of the Task Force originate with the students and they often prepare written proposals and reports.

The Student Director is responsible for organizing Task Force activities, contacting members when requests for student participation are received, and providing them with background information for their visits to conferences or school systems. This person also organizes the monthly meetings and plans the agenda. The Adult Director handles the administrative duties within the State Department of Public Instruction: planning the budget; representing the Task Force at out-of-state meetings; speaking to in-state groups; handling correspondence; and keeping other top administrators informed of Task Force activities. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction usually attends some of the sessions of the Raleigh meetings to exchange ideas and keep up-to-date on the Task Force program.

Budget

The Task Force currently is operating on a budget of $15,673 in federal funds and $6,400 from the Council of State's Contingency Fund. A budget of $40,000 has been proposed to the State Department of Public Instruction. Additional funds are being sought from the federal government. The Task Force is working on a change in its reimbursement policies so that students will be paid for their travel expenses before rather than after each trip in order to eliminate any financial difficulties for individual members.

Section Four

SPECIAL PROGRAMS OF THE TASK FORCE

There are a number of concerns that serve as the basis for the activity programs of the Task Force. These concerns represent student interpretation of the causes of student unrest in the schools. Positive action programs are being advocated and sponsored by the Task Force in an attempt to alleviate the unrest and to bring about more student involvement in the resolution of problems.

Human Relations

From its beginning, the Task Force has been concerned with the issue of human relations in North Carolina. Guidelines for establishing Human Relations Councils and for policies regarding minority groups have been suggested to local high schools. The Task Force has also worked closely with the Human Relations Division of the State Department of Public Instruction, participating in conferences, visiting troubled areas and providing a student viewpoint on particular situations. One Task Force member organized a Human Relations Week for his hometown. Townspeople, educators, and students worked together to make the project a success. Another Task Force member organized a conference for area schools faced with the problems of integration and consolidation. Other specific programs on the local level have also been successfully implemented. A new booklet will be published and made available to the public by the Task Force. It will deal with the philosophy, problems and procedures of good human relations.

School Accreditation

Periodically North Carolina schools are evaluated by state and/or regional accreditation teams. In the past, some students have been involved in assisting their own high school to ready itself for the visits of such groups, but students have never participated in the accreditation process itself. Believing that a student's viewpoint would be valuable in an accreditation report, the Task Force, working with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, has arranged for the inclusion of a Task Force member on several evaluating committees. Thus far the reception has been positive at all the schools visited. The members never evaluate their own high schools and are briefed on the purposes of the visit. The student visits the school with the committee and participates in the standard observation methods of the team. He also talks with a random sampling of students and interviews the faculty and administration about student involvement. A report is then submitted to the committee chairmen.

At present, each student works in conjunction with an adult on the topic of Student Activities in the accreditation process. However, in the future it is envisioned that the sole responsibility for this area of evaluation will be with the student member of the accreditation team. The inclusion of a student, not necessarily a Task Force member, is planned for every accreditation team for both the State and the Southern Association.

Curriculum Evaluation

One area in which increased student participation is both valuable and possible is curriculum evaluation. The Task Force has recommended that high schools set up student advisory committees to work with the faculty and administrators on curriculum revision. At the state level, the ten divisions in the Department for curriculum development, such as language arts, cultural arts, and mathematics, are preparing for the inclusion of youth on their committees. It is envisioned in the Department that seventy-five to one hundred high school students eventually will be working with the state administrators on curriculum planning. The Task Force plans to publish and release a booklet about innovative academic programs and possible curriculum improvements that should be considered for the public high schools in North Carolina.

Mini-Courses

One of the innovative academic programs which the Task Force has been investigating is the development of "mini-courses." The idea was introducted in North Carolina by Mrs. Nancy Gamewell, an English teacher at Albemarle High School, Albemarle, N. C.*who was inspired by an article in Today's Education entitled "Maximum Results from Mini-Courses," which describes a similar experiment in Hamilton, Massachusetts, in 1968. Mrs. Gamewell "challenged" her Advanced English IV class with the idea and they organized the program with a minimum of guidance. Classes for seniors were suspended for a week while they participated in courses of their own design. Instructors were recruited from the local community and nearby Pheiffer College as well as from the school's

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*For more information on this experiment, see "Students Organize Mini-Courses," North Carolina Public Schools, XXXIV (May, 1970), 3.

own faculty and student body. Thirty-six subjects outside the regular curriculum, such as self-defense, law enforcement, drugs, and extrasensory perception, were offered in accordance with student body requests for "more relevant" learning.

The enthusiastic student response to this program came to the attention of a Task Force member who decided to apply the idea in her own high school. Here again the program was organized and administered by students with the approval of both the faculty and administration. The idea was presented to the student body in assembly and each student checked two of fifty-six suggested topics in which he was most interested. From this, twenty-six were chosen and appropriate instructors were sought. The subjects for the mini-courses varied widely, touching many skills and interests generally untouched in the normal classroom situation--for example, knitting, archery, guitar, astronomy, and sex education (taught by local doctors and with parental permission). The courses were held at night and opened to the entire student body. Each student could enroll for two one-hour courses on an optional basis. More than sixty per cent of the student body returned to the school at night to participate. The students themselves recommended that the program be continued as a night-time project in the school system.

The Task Force is preparing a report for inclusion in a planned curriculum revision booklet, outlining the basic concept of mini-courses and alternative plans for its application in different school systems. They hope that the success of the program to date can be repeated and perhaps expanded in other areas of the state.

Conferences and Consultations

Task Force representatives have been and are being invited to attend conferences or visit in school districts. Sometimes members present student concern and outlook on particular topics such as drugs or juvenile delinquency and, often, they explain the purposes and organization of the Task Force itself. The entire Task Force attended a workshop for three hundred teachers and presented points of view regarding the problems stemming from a faculty integration move. The program was handled by Task Force members who made brief presentations and participated in small discussion groups. Task Force members also have attended meetings of the Good Neighbor Council, the Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, and the North Carolina Student Council Congress, among many others.

In individual high schools the Task Force has been invited to meet with student councils and human relations councils to discuss problems and procedures. On occasion, representatives from the Task Force are invited to attend meetings of local school boards along with student leaders from the local high schools. There is usually a frank exchange of ideas as the school board members attempt to gain a better understanding of student attitudes. In response to the efforts of the Task Force to assist the local school system in determining the reasons for a lack of student involvement and in suggesting possibilities for improvement, a local superintendent said that he "has nothing but praise and enthusiastic support for the Task Force."

Other Youth Organizations

Since its inception, the Task Force has recognized other youth groups which are already organized and established as good examples of student involvement and potential vehicles for achieving the objectives of the Task Force. The North Carolina Student Council Congress (NCSCC) and the Youth Council of North Carolina (YCNC) are perhaps the two most influential groups. Most of the Task Force members are, or have been, involved with student councils or youth councils at the local and/or State level. Because many objectives are shared with these two organizations, the Task Force hopes to work with them: (1) to achieve more input of student ideas and more manpower for positive student involvement; and (2) to help them become more representative and more relevant to student needs.

North Carolina Student Council Congress. The NCSCC has member organizations in approximately two-hundred seventy-five high schools, more than half the North Carolina total. Many Task Force members see the student councils' broad base in the educational system as a vital key to achieving positive student involvement. Some student council leaders feared that the Task Force would become a competitive organization, draining leadership from local high schools. One advisor termed its activities as "outside interference" which has "confused and divided" students. However, in general the reaction to cooperation with the Task Force has been quite good, and many areas have expressed a desire to know more about the committee's activities. The NCSCC Executive Director stressed more future cooperation and exchange of ideas to avoid overlapping programs. Representatives of the Task Force have attended the state convention of the Council and three regional conventions to explain exactly what the Task Force is and to explore jointly held goals.

With the permission of the head of State Student Councils, the Task Force sponsors independently initiated surveys of student councils. All student council advisors in the State have been contacted for information on representation, projects, committees, elections, and general effectiveness of their respective councils. Questionnaires have been distributed to students at randomly selected schools to ascertain their ideas and opinions on student councils. Normally this type of activity is conducted by a local student or student group with the financial backing and advice of the Task Force. A statistician is available for advice in order to insure accuracy. The results of various projects of this nature will be presented in a composite booklet designed to inform and assist North Carolina students and teachers in their efforts to have a representative, active, and relevant student council.

Youth Council of North Carolina. YCNC is a separate State agency established by the General Assembly in May, 1969. First organized in Greensboro in 1962, local youth councils now operate in six North Carolina cities. On the local level they sponsor many activities for high school students and try to unite and coordinate different high schools and youth groups in an area. The goals of YCNC and the Task Force are very similar although the approach to positive student involvement is through the political system for the former, and the educational system for the latter. There has been little coordination between the two groups so far. This difficulty is being overcome and, as both programs expand, there will probably be greater communication and cooperation between the two organizations.

Student Organizations. Many interest and career oriented clubs such as the Future Teachers of America and the Distributive Education Clubs of America have widespread student membership in North Carolina. No specific programs have been set up with such groups yet, but the Task Force is aware of their potential influence and hopes to work more closely with them to promote positive student involvement in their respective areas of interest.

Section Five

PROBLEMS AND CONSTRAINTS

Membership in the Task Force for Student Involvement places great demands upon students carrying full academic loads. Each member must attend monthly meetings in Raleigh, be available for participation in conferences and visits to other school systems, and maintain communication with students and administrators within his own area, usually comprising many counties. Although as many activities as possible are scheduled for weekends, some school time must be missed. All members of the Task Force are expected to meet all their academic responsibilities. Generally, individual high schools have been most cooperative in helping them to make up lost work.

Students working with the Task Force admit that they are often frustrated by the lack of time to accomplish all their goals but feel that they can handle their obligations. Members agree that participants in the Task Force should avoid holding major offices in their local areas due to the lack of time. However, in order to be in touch with student opinion and to promote student involvement, it is necessary that they themselves be actively involved in affairs at their own high schools. Administrators and students agree that over-extension is a "necessary evil" associated not only with the members of the Task Force but with any student who is involved in extra-curricular activities. In order to ease the burden placed on individual members, the Task Force will make an effort to recruit more students to work in association with them as representatives of youth opinion at conferences and on accreditation teams.

The Selection Process

Since the school year was well underway when the Task Force was organized November, 1969, members were largely recruited from students having experience with the Summer Task Force, the Human Relations Staff, YCNC, and NCSCC. Most of them were high school seniors, but in the interest of self-perpetuation and a broader base of representation, future committees will include more juniors and possibly sophomores.

The Task Force is presently considering methods of selection that will create local trust in the activities of the group without sacrificing their objective of having students, responsible only to the State organization, from different social backgrounds with different points of view on student involvement. Some suggestions relating to the selection of Task Force members are:

- that Task Force members encourage promising students in their districts to apply for membership;

- that conservative and liberal students from school systems of corresponding orientation should be selected;
- that applications be screened by local administrators to determine whether there would be any potential conflict;
- that membership be rotated among schools in a district to attain wider exposure; and
- that representatives be nominated by other organized youth groups as well as by local systems.

Two new Task Force members as well as the Student Director have been chosen by an application and interview process that will probably be continued. Final selection is largely influenced by the interview with the Adult and Student Directors and, when possible, with the district Task Force member.

Local Acceptance

Although the Task Force has been enthusiastically received at the State level, there are some local areas which have been unreceptive to its activities. Being an advisory board for the State Department of Public Instruction is only one of the committee's many objectives. *To promote widespread student involvement, it is necessary to become involved with students across the state.* At one of their early meetings the group decided that they would work only within a school district with the approval and support of the superintendent so as to avoid any implication that they are working against, rather than within, the established system. Many local superintendents have responded favorably to the idea of a Student Task Force. However, there were others, with widely varying reasons, who did not want to work with them. Some had been unfavorably impressed by the Summer Task Force at the Superintendents Conference in July, 1969. Others felt that "outsiders" could not be of any help with the problems faced in their systems. Still others resented the fact that they had not been consulted or adequately informed about the group's formation and activities. Administrators having Task Force members within their systems agree that their attitudes about it, both positive and negative, have been influenced primarily by their contact with the individual representative. They suggest that *a Task Force member from every school system would improve understanding.*

Convincing skeptical superintendents that the Task Force does have valuable services to offer will be one of the main objectives for the committee. The Task Force plans personal visits to all superintendents in the state, including those who did not respond to the introductory letters. Newsletters designed to keep them up-to-date on Task Force activities are also being considered. A publicity campaign will be aimed at creating a greater understanding of the basic philosophy of the organization. The Task Force hopes that the continuing support of the State Department of Public Instruction and the numerous examples of its successful activities in many school systems will convince other areas to seek its services.

Administrative Expansion

As the Task Force has adopted more projects and been invited to more and more local school systems, the problem of organization and coordination have

grown. Already there is not enough time for the staff to follow up properly many of the Task Force visits. A part-time assistant Student Director will be added to the State Department staff and, if funds become available, a full-time secretary will be hired. However, if the present expansion rate continues and all the proposed innovations go into effect, more full-time staff members will be needed to coordinate activities across the State.

Section Six

FUTURE PLANS

Though the Task Force for Student Involvement has experienced some difficulties, it has had an observable impact upon North Carolina's educational system and is becoming firmly established as a part of the State Department of Public Instruction. One of its most remarkable features is that *it is flexible and, as such, not bound by tradition or adult dominance.* Though the Task Force has had a short history and has been of an experimental nature, the group has developed numerous plans to further its effort in behalf of students throughout the State.

Regional Task Force for Western North Carolina

The Task Force received a grant of $4,305 from the Appalachian Regional Commission (A.R.C.) for use in promoting positive student involvement in western North Carolina. These funds will be used to establish an eight-county regional Task Force organized in the same manner as the state committee and be closely associated with the State Department of Public Instruction. A present Task Force member will be director of the regional committee. Most of the A.R.C. money will be spent for conferences and workshops for western North Carolina students and to finance student-initiated projects. Student groups that are planning to establish day-care centers and are concerned with environmental study have already expressed interest. The regional Task Force will concentrate on increased student involvement not only in the general educational system but also in the problems unique in western North Carolina.

Conferences and Workshops

One of the Task Force representatives has organized a workshop for her district to deal with student inactivity and non-participation in State organizations and in the educational process by many northeastern North Carolina student bodies. All but one of the superintendents in the area have lent their support to the proposal and students from each high school, teachers, administrators, and state human relations officials will be invited. Representatives from the Eastern District of the North Carolina Student Council Congress will attend to promote greater involvement in their activities. Constructive methods of approaching the consolidation and integration processes that have been established will be explored. Similar workshops dealing with regional problems are being considered for other areas of the state.

During the summer the State Department of Public Instruction sponsors many conferences and workshops for administrators and faculty across the state. The Task Force plan to send representatives to many of these with a special focus

on greater faculty-student cooperation. Invitations have been accepted to attend a drug forum in Chapel Hill, a conference on occupational education at Western Carolina University, and the conferences sponsored by organizations such as NCSCC and individual school systems.

Task Force members are continuing to concentrate on making contacts with other students who can be available to represent youth at future conferences. Hopefully this effort will spread out student responsibility and ease the time and travel burden upon individual Task Force members.

Publicity Campaign

The Task Force has reached many school districts and hundreds of students in its short span of operation. However, many areas which have had little or no direct contact with the Task Force have only vague concepts of its purposes and the services it has to offer. The Task Force plans to introduce itself to the state at large, including areas in which it has no specific programs. Posters and brochures explaining the organization, purposes, and services of the Task Force are being distributed. As in the past, Task Force members will be available for conferences or assemblies upon invitation and articles for student and community newspapers and newsletters will be prepared for distribution throughout the state.

Summer Intern Program

A plan for a summer internship program for Task Force members has been devised to utilize fully the experience they have gained and to enlarge the spectrum of activities pursued by the Task Force. Presently the estimated $16,000 that would be necessary to implement the program is not available however, the concepts of this proposal are being retained for future consideration.

According to the proposed plan, five Task Force members would be employed annually as full-time summer interns in the State Department of Public Instruction. Selection would be based upon judgment of written proposals for summer activities submitted by the students. These students would work on a project of their own design and also be available to work with the Human Relations Division and to participate in summer conferences and teacher workshops. Eight other members, one from each of the educational districts, would also have the status of state-employed summer interns working in their local areas and maintaining contact with the State Department office. Hopefully this program would afford the individual student the time, mobility, financial backing, and status to apply his ideas and, as the proposal emphasizes, to *"practice what we preach . . . . . student involvement."*

Expansion into Other States

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) has shown great interest in the unique experiment of the Task Force for Student Involvement. The Adult Director has met in Washington with representatives of HEW to discuss the possibility of establishing similar programs in other states. With hopes for funding from Title V, Section 505 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the proposed plan calls for the creation of student task forces in four other states with the total program being organized, guided, and coordinated by North Carolina.

Proposed Publications

Publications represent a major effort of the Task Force in spreading the "views of youth" in the state. An extensive program has been planned and will include:

- An extensive revision of the booklet, "Student Involvement: A Bridge to Total Education."
- A brochure on the organization of the Task Force itself. [This will explain what the Task Force is, outline the services it has to offer, and report on some of its recent activities.]
- A booklet on educational reforms and revisions. [This will report on specific programs such as mini-courses, independent study programs, and the Parkway System presently operating in Philadelphia and include information about the possible use of seminars and experimental classes in the high school program in order to deviate from the present structure of six or seven periods per day and to better meet the needs of the students.]
- A pamphlet on election procedures, concentrating on specific methods rather than on philosophy. [The primary goal is to reconcile the one-man, one-vote philosophy with the need for more adequate minority group representation. Several different procedures, such as the precinct and petition methods, that have proven successful in North Carolina high schools will be presented in the pamphlet.]
- A booklet reporting the results and suggested guidelines for greater effectiveness of Student Councils. [This will be published and distributed in cooperation with the North Carolina Student Council Congress, and will contain the results of the Student Council evaluations.]

In Summary

First formed in November, 1969, the Task Force is still a young organization. Most of its months have been spent defining and redefining its goals--then searching for practical ways to apply them. Although many of the members are frustrated at the number of areas that remain untouched and the number of students still unstimulated, the Task Force has laid an extensive groundwork for future action across the State. *There is also much tangible evidence of increased student involvement as a direct result of Task Force activities--students on accreditation teams, students on curriculum evaluation committees, successful mini-course programs, students and administrators working together to solve human relations problems, and more.* Despite the fact that many local administrators have been reluctant to cooperate with the Task Force's programs, the demand for its services has grown steadily with increased exposure.

Not only is the Task Force for Student Involvement an innovative program for the state of North Carolina, but for the nation as well. As the Adult Director, Debbie Sweet says, "The important thing is that the Task Force is." *Students have been recognized as a vital key to the problems facing the State's schools, and they have been offered, and willingly accepted, the responsibility for finding constructive solutions.* They also are aiming toward positive involvement in the administrative processes of the educational system.